

trapped in failing schools. This was part of the President's original plan and, while far from the only part, it is a very important part.

The amendment would restore all the private school choice provisions that were struck in the bill in committee, except for the demonstration program. Specifically, the amendment would restore private school choice as an option for disadvantaged students who have attended failing schools for at least 3 years. It would restore private school choice as a local use of funds under title IV of the Innovative Education Grants for Disadvantaged Students. It restores private school choice for students who are stuck in unsafe schools and where there are no other public schools to which they could transfer. And, it restores private school choice for students who have been victims of crime on school premises and where there are no other public schools to which they could transfer.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is common knowledge that we already have school choice in this country, except for poor children. Suburban parents, including many members of this body, are more likely to have the financial means to send their children to private schools, but low-income parents cannot afford this option. While we would continue to deny parents with children in failing schools the opportunity that Members of Congress enjoy, I just do not know.

We are told that providing poor children a way out of failing schools will siphon away money from the public school system. Quite frankly, I do not think this argument holds water.

Mr. Chairman, a couple of years ago, Matthew Miller, writing for the Atlantic Monthly, asked Bob Chase, who is the president of the National Education Association, if the NEA would support vouchers in exchange for tripling per-pupil spending for inner city kids, and guess what? Jay said, "no."

This is not about money, even assuming, which we should not, that spending more money automatically increases student achievement. This is about an education bureaucracy that is resistant to change and mired in habit. This about powerful lobbies that refuse to accept any change in the status quo.

Where it has been tried, school choice works. Harvard University's Jay Green found that Florida students' test scores have improved across the board since the implementation of Florida's A-Plus program, similar to the plan that we would see in this amendment. And a September 1999 report conducted by the Indiana Center for Evaluation found that participants in Cleveland's scholarship program scored up to 5 percentile points higher than their public school counterparts in language and science assessments.

Disadvantaged students have the most to gain from school choice. Consider the characteristics from those who benefit from Milwaukee's Parental School Choice plan: Fifty-four percent receive Aid to Families with Depend-

ent Children money, they come from families with an average income of \$11,600; 76 percent come from single-parent homes, and more than 96 percent are from ethnic minorities.

Mr. Chairman, this is a good amendment. These are good provisions. They will help parents and they will help children stuck in failing schools.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHAFER) assumed the chair.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

#### NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, vouchers are a hotly debated topic throughout our Nation. The Michigan and California members of this House are very aware of this debate, having just had major ballot initiatives on private school vouchers recently defeated in their respective States.

In my home State of Michigan, in fact, our private school voucher proposition was opposed by over two-thirds of the Michigan voters, with a similar vote in California. The people of those two States, which are quite a cross-section of America, have spoken very clearly on this issue.

In committee, all private school voucher provisions were removed from the bill with bipartisan support. I believe that the passage of this amendment does jeopardize the many months of bipartisan work that have gone into producing this legislation. I would hope that the House would preserve the bipartisan support for this legislation and reject this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Arney-Boehner-DeLay amendment because school choice is about one thing. It is about educational opportunity for all Americans, regardless of their race or socioeconomic status. The parents of children trapped in our most dangerous and failing schools are having to challenge a status quo that opposes those opportunities to them.

This debate, Mr. Chairman, between the status quo and the needs of largely minority students is not new. Decades ago, the defenders of the status quo

stood in the schoolhouse door and said to some, you may not come in. Now, the defenders of the status quo stand in the schoolhouse door and say to the grandchildren of many of those same Americans, you may not come out.

I strongly rise in support of the Arney-Boehner-DeLay amendment in so much as it is part and parcel of restoring the dream of boundless educational opportunity for all Americans.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER).

(Mr. ROEMER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment. I do so because the very heart and soul of this bill includes not only public school choice in the first year of a failing school where students taking their tests in April and finding that they are failing that test in the summertime are then afforded immediate public school choice that September.

We are expanding in this bill public school choice, charter schools, magnet schools, and then further on in the process, even opening up public school choice more than that for schools that go into the school improvement category.

So we have full public school choice. We are looking with new vision and new boldness to open up more options and empower our parents to make more choices within the public school system.

But this bill is also about accountability. We are saying for the first time in 30 years that schools must be accountable, that failure is no longer an option, whether it be for inner city school kids or suburban kids, and we are requiring them to take tests, and we are saying, we will invest more money to remediate the kids if they fail a test, but we want to know where they are with these tests. We are going to strengthen accountability.

This amendment has no accountability in it. We take the money with the voucher from the public school to a private school, and then there is no accountability there. No test, no trail, no nothing. As a student, as somebody who went to Catholic schools, I am not sure that we want those Catholic schools having to be accountable to the government for curriculum, for testing, for other things.

So on accountability, this amendment fails. I think in terms of public school choice, we are opening that up, I think this amendment fails.

Finally, this amendment would allow us the per-pupil expenditure under title I. That would be the whopping figure of about \$639 for a voucher. Now, we defeated \$1,500 in committee. This would be less than half that and would really not even get you in the classroom, let alone the front door of the school.

Mr. Chairman, I urge bipartisan defeat of this amendment.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume for